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SECURITY INFORMATION

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

26 August 1952

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 266

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

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1. [REDACTED] does not actually suggest that fundamental British policy has changed. For some years the UK JCS have considered that the West's policy towards the USSR should proceed through two main stages:

a. First, the build-up by the West, as rapidly as feasible, of sufficient military power to discourage aggression by the USSR.

b. Second, the undertaking by the West of more forthright Cold War activities.

2. The UK did not envisage that the West, in pursuit of this policy, would match the USSR in quantities of manpower and equipment, but that it would derive its particular strength from qualitative superiority, especially in offensive special weapons.

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3. [REDACTED] does indicate that the UK has recently re-assessed the international situation and has concluded that the risk of deliberate initiation of war by the USSR is not as great as previously estimated.

4. In view of the whole postwar history of Anglo-US strategic cooperation, the UK can almost certainly be counted upon to seek consultations with the US if and when any new official position on the international situation is established.

5. Meanwhile, we believe that the stretch-out in the British rearmament program is due less to a strategic re-assessment than to economic pressures.

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